

A
DISCOURSE
ON
FORNICATION:

SHEWING THE
Greatness of that SIN;

AND

Examining the Excuses pleaded for it, from
the Examples of Antient Times.

To which is added an

Appendix concerning Concubinage;

As also

A Remark on Mr. Butler's Explication of *Hebr.* xiii. 4.
in his Late Book on that Subject.

By J. Turner, M. A. Lecturer of *Christ-Church, London.*

Printed at the Request of some Gentlemen of that Parish.

O Proceres, Censore opus est, an Aruspice, nobis? Juv. Sat. 2.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *John Wyat*, at the *Rose* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*,
MDCXCVIII.

W. S.

Ref. Rev. Rev.

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A
DISCOURSE
ON
FORNICATION.

Shewing the Greatness of that Sin, and examining the Excuses pleaded for it from the Examples of Ancient Times.

WHile all good Men lament the Wickedness and Debauchery of this Age and Nation, and justly dread the heavy Judgments of God for the notorious Iniquities every Day committed; among other Circumstances that increase their Grief, and enhance their Fears, They have this Discomfort; that the Looseness of Mens Manners had corrupted their Judgments, and defaced their Sense of Good and Evil: So that instead of Humiliation before God, some Men justify themselves, and are so far from abandoning their Vices that they plead Innocence, and upon the Perpetration of the vilest Crimes, cry out with *Solomon's Harlot*, that *they have done nothing amiss*.

This is in no Sin more practised than in those of Adultery and Fornication. Adultery may possibly be allowed to have somewhat of Ill in it; especially on the Womans Side,

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where

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where there is a manifest Injury to a whole Family ; and yet it is an Argument that this makes no great Impression on some Peoples Consciences, because it is so openly and publicly practised. But Fornication, by the leud Persons of this Age, is avowed to be innocent and harmless. And yet there must be a great share both of Confidence and Impiety, in that Christian who disputes the Unlawfulness of a Vice, which in the whole New Testament is frequently and expressly declared to shut Men out of the Kingdom of God. If the Authority of the Gospel was but submitted to by these Men, and suffered to guide their Consciences as it ought; no more would be needful to convince and restrain them, than any one of these Texts, wherein it is said, that *no Whoremonger, or unclean Person, has any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.*

But this alone will not now prevail; They appeal from the Gospel to the Law, and tell you how, as they imagin, was the Practice of ancient Times. They expostulate with you how it comes to pass, that what was anciently tolerated and allowed, comes now to be reckoned such a dreadful and enormous Crime ; so that they make it a matter of Debate and Controversy, and must have their Objections and Scruples answered, before the Gospel shall be heard, or they can become sensible of their Wickedness, and give any Hope of their being reclaimed. The Preachers may say what they will in their Pulpits about the Justice and Severity of God, and the Vengeance which he threatens against Sinners. This is never like to move Men, while they concoit their Actions justifiable, and persuade themselves that they do not come within the Verge of those Menaces.

At a time therefore when the Piety and Wisdom of our Governors seem resolved to check and restrain the intolerable Growth of Impiety: It may not be unreasonable to treat with these Men, and lay open the Heinousness and criminal Immorality of one of the most predominant Sins of this

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Age; and if I mistake not, one of the great Occasions and Promoters of a Spirit of Atheism, Profaneness, and Irreligion.

I hope, what I shall say on this Subject may be serviceable to those whose Consciences are not seared, and who are not wholly given unto vile Affections and a reprobate Mind. But they who resolve to do any thing that gratifies their Lusts, though never so expressly forbidden; may believe any thing that favours those Pleasures, tho' never so evidently false and absurd.

If I do not say all that might be said to the Advantage of so considerable a Subject; I hope at least that it may either invite or provoke better Judges to take so good a Cause in hand.

The certain Immorality of this Practice, and the Greatness of this Sin, I shall endeavour to make appear by these Arguments.

I. That Fornication is a Violation of God's positive Law, in the original Institution of Marriage.

II. That it is expressly forbidden in the Gospel, and absolutely inconsistent with that pure and holy Life, which the Christian Religion requires from us.

III. Lastly, From the natural Turpitude of it, and the Evils and pernicious Consequences that attend it.

I. The first Assertion is, that Fornication is a Violation of the positive Law of God in the original Institution of Marriage; and this I shall endeavour to prove from *Gen. 2.23,24.* where, in the Relation of Eve's being formed out of Adam's Side, there are these Words: *Adam said, This is now Bone of my Bones, and Flesh of my Flesh, she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man: And therefore shall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife, and they shall be one Flesh. And for the better clearing of this Argument, I shall proceed thus.*

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1. I shall shew, that God, to provide against the Corruptions of Man's fal'n State, when he had lost the original Perfection of his Reason by Sin, did assist him in some Cases by Divine Positive Laws.

2. That these Words mention'd *Gen. 2.24.* have in them the Force and Authority of a Divine Law.

3. I shall consider what the true Sense and Purpose of this Law is.

4. I shall shew that Fornication is a certain Violation of it, and must therefore be an heinous Sin, and highly offensive unto God.

5. Lastly, I shall consider the Objections that are commonly made against this Argument, from the Practice of some particular Men in ancient times, that are nevertheless recorded to have had a singular Share in God's Favor.

1. I shall shew that God, to provide against the Corruptions of Man's fal'n State, when he had lost the original Perfection of his Reason by Sin, did assist him in some Cases by Divine Positive Laws. But here I would not be mistaken in my Meaning of a Positive Law; By which Expression is commonly understood such a Command or Precept as ties Man up to Obedience in things of an indifferent Nature, and where he was left at Liberty by the Laws of Reason. This is the common meaning of this Phrase, and things forbidden by Positive Laws in this Sense, are therefore supposed to have no real Evil or Immorality in them. And though it is certain, that God did very early give Mankind some such positive Institutions, yet I do by no means intend the original Institution of Marriage to be positive in such a Sense, as to suppose that it has no Foundations in the Laws of Nature, or the Principles of Reason, for that it most certainly has. But my Meaning is, that to prevent either Ignorance or any Misconstruction of the Laws of Reason in favour of Man's Lusts: God was pleased to confirm some of the Principles of Reason by Revelation, and strengthen the Laws of Nature by Positive Institution.

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For we must consider, that the Laws of Nature or Reason are either, 1. Such general Precepts and obvious Inferences from them, as every considering Man may see and be convinced of their Obligation. Or else, 2. Such Remoter Principles of Virtue and Goodness, which though they have their Foundation in Reason, yet they lie at a greater Distance from the first plain Notices, and consequently must be found out by a more careful and difficult Deduction. And tho' I do not at all doubt but that Man, in that Perfection of Reason in which he was originally created, was then a sufficient Guide unto himself in all these Cases: Yet, when humane Nature was corrupted and depraved, he did then require some farther Help: Then, either Sloth, Inconsideration, Prejudice, the Imperfection of his Reason now impaired by Sin, and the Influence of his Passions and Affections to bribe and pervert his Judgment: Might easily make him ignorant of such more distant Principles, although they had their Foundation in the Laws of Nature. For which reason our wise and good God, of his wonderful Compassion and Love to Mankind, was pleased to come in to our Assistance, and to prevent the Influence of our Lusts, enlightned our Minds by Revelation, and confirmed and establish'd the Authority of some such natural Laws, by making them also express and positive Institutions. And this is the Sense in which I wou'd be now understood to speak of Divine Positive Laws.

Now the Jews were of opinion that God gave *Adam* several such Laws to direct him in things that were in themselves Good or Evil: Because that Good or Evil of them, was not obvious enough to the common Observation of Mens depraved Minds. Such they esteemed the Case of incestuous Marriages, which, they say, God forbid by express Law to *Adam*, therein ordaining, that after Mankind was so far multiplied, that the Marriage of Brother and Sister was no longer necessary to the Propagation of Human Race; they shou'd all from thenceforth become unlawful.

And

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And when it shall be consider'd, that the natural Immorality of them has been a Subject of Debate in several Ages: It will be the more reasonable to conclude that there was some very early Positive Law that prohibited all such. Because this is one of the Sins charged upon the Canaanites, and their Example alleged as a Caution and Warning to the Israelites, *Lev. xviii. 24. Defile not your selves in any of these things, for in all these the Nations are defiled which I cast out before you.* Now when it shall be consider'd how difficult it has been thought in all Ages, to evince the certain Immorality of such by the clear Evidence of any natural Law only, in the Transgression of which the Canaanites were guilty: It is more probable that God added the Authority of some Positive Law, restraining both them and all Mankind in this respect.

And tho Sacrifices were not so in their Nature Good, as to be of Perpetual Use and Everlasting Obligation: Yet as they made up a considerable Part of the divine Worship of almost all Nations, until the Incarnation of our Saviour: so I think they also are no improper Instances in our present purpose. What Law of Nature only shou'd dictate them is very hard to shew. Reason indeed teaches to worship God after the best manner that we can. But I cannot imagin that any Principle of Reason only teaches that to burn the Fat of Beasts, or the Fruits of the Earth, can be an acceptable way of honouring God, or of expressing our Dependence and Thanks. Or that the Light of Nature only cou'd ever guide and determin Mankind so universally to such Sacrifices: Which our best Reason teaches us are in themselves not acceptable, but only valued as Types and Figures of a better Sacrifice to come.

Nor can I believe, but that the setting apart one Day in Seven, for the Worship of God our Creator, was what he Ordained and Commanded from the beginning. For tho some wou'd have those Words, *Gen. 2. 2, 3.* to be spoken by way

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way of Anticipation; yet that is precariously asserted, and without any Proof. Whereas there are several good Reasons to be alleged for the more early Original of that divine Institution.

1. Because the reason of keeping that Day holy is so expressly founded on the Consideration of God's resting from his Work in the Creation. For it seems odd, that God shou'd compleat the Creation of the Universe in six Days, and rest on the seventh; only to give Authority to one particular temporary Ordinance, of one Particular Little Nation, and that too, that was not to Commence till about two thousand Years after.

2. Because it is not to be supposed; that God all that while took no care for the establishing public Worship in memory of the Creation; to which the appointing some set Time was in a great measure necessary.

And 3. Because it is mentioned again, *Exod. xvi. 23.* before ever God gave the Law to the Jews from Mount Sinai: And which, for that reason, I conjecture not to have been the original Institution; but only the Reviving an ancient divine Ordinance, which by their long sojourning and Servitude in *Egypt*, they had neglected and lost.

All this together, I hope, puts it out of doubt that God very early assisted Man's Reason by some express Positive Laws.

The second thing is,

2. That those Words above mentioned, *Gen. 2. 23, 24.* have in them the Force and Authority of a divine Institution or Law. For the Confirmation of which, I shall add no more than this single Reflection; that our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, in all the Questions put to them about the Validity of Marriage, and the Unlawfulness of Divorce: Always refer to this original Institution, and by the sole Authority of that, determin the Controversies, and decide all Disputes about them. Which shews without Contradiction, that

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that Christ knew these Words to have in them the obligatory Force of a divine Law; or otherwise, the Determinations which he gave from the Authority of them, cou'd not have had that Force and Weight which he intended. Whatever is farther needful for the Proof of this, will occur as we proceed,

3. To consider what the true Purpose, Design, and Meaning of this Law is. Now the most obvious and first Sense of it without doubt is, to enjoin a Perpetual and Inseparable Cohabitation of Man and Wife. They shall dwell together, and *leave both Father and Mother* to that very end, if need so require. But this is not all. The full Scope of the Place must be fetcht from the near Relation and close Union that is here pronounced to be between them. *They two shall be one Flesh*, which the Generality of Interpreters expound by the Love and sincere Affection which they ought always to have for each other. And tho this, no doubt, is a very good and useful Construction of the Place, yet neither is this all. *St. Paul, Eph. v. 28, 29.* lays down this as a just and necessary Foundation of their mutual Love; *so ought Men to love their Wives as their own Bodies; he that loveth his Wife loveth himself. And no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh.* But that there is more in this than a bare Union of Affections, is evident by what is here urged by *Adam* as the Ground of it. *She is Bone of my Bones, and Flesh of my Flesh, and therefore shall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife, and they shall be one Flesh.* From whence it is plain, that *Adam* and *Eve* were one Flesh in a more literal Sense, in that she was a Part of him, and by the Almighty Power of God made out of him.

And tho every Wife is not thus formed out of the Side of her Husband, yet every Man and his Wife are esteemed of God, and ought to think themselves made as much *One Flesh* by Marriage, as *Adam* and *Eve* themselves were. And the great Purpose and Design of this Place is to proclaim and declare

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declare them to be so. And whatever the Nature of their Union may be, which St. Paul, *Eph. 5. 32.* intimates *is a great Mystery*: the Foundation of that Union seems to consist in their Cohabitation, and the mutual Partnership of each others Bed. By which they become so much one, that they ought never to separate from each other: Till God who by this Ordinance and Law joins them together and makes them one, shall by Death dissolve that Union, and part them asunder.

And that this is the true Meaning and Design of these Words I am able to make appear from the Authority of Jesus Christ. Who upon this very Consideration, and this Argument thus stated, proves to the Jews the inseparable Union between a Man and his Wife, and the Unlawfulness of a Divorce or Separation upon any account. The Place I refer to is *Matt. xix. 3. &c.* Where we are told that the *Pharisees* came to him tempting him and saying, *Is it lawful for a Man to put away his Wife for every Cause?*

In answer to whom, he takes no notice at all of the Common Pretences usually alleged, but refers them to the Original Institution of Marriage mentioned in these Words, *v. 4.* *Have ye not read, that he that made them in the beginning made them Male and Female, and said, for this cause shall a Man leave his Father and his Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife, and they two shall be one flesh? What therefore God has joined together let no Man put asunder.* This is Christ's Decision of the Question. The Force of which Answer turns all upon these Points. 1. That the Union between Man and Wife is founded in their Cohabitation; and the Partnership of each others Bed. 2. That God from the beginning Ordained that this Union shou'd be inseparable and inviolable. (*i. e.*) that it shou'd continue during the whole Life of both. And therefore it is that Divorce becomes unlawful, and contrary to God's Original Institution. For whom God hath joined together, let no Man put asunder. 3. That this Union which

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God has made thus inseparable, shou'd be between Man and Wife only, exclusive of all others. And therefore every Man or Woman by thus uniting to any Second Person, during the Life of the First, does thereby break that Union with the First which God commanded, when once made, that it shou'd be perpetual. Upon this it is, that *Christ* declares all such Marriages upon Divorce to be Adultery. *Matt. xix. 9. I say unto you whosoever shall put away his Wife, except it be for Fornication, and shall marry another, committeth Adultery. And whosoever shall marry her that is put away committeth Adultery.* In which Words there is a double Confirmation of what I now maintain.

1. That marrying upon Divorce, or marrying a Person divorced is Adultery. Because he that marries upon Divorce, takes a Second Wife, while his Union and Obligation to the First, by God's Original Institution is still in force. And he that marries a Woman that is divorced marries another Man's Wife in the Sense of God's Law, and in that commits Adultery. Both these Cases are a Violation of that Union, which God decreed shou'd not be violated.

2. The second thing is, the Exception which *Christ* makes to these Cases. *Except it be for Fornication.* Where he seems to tolerate Divorce upon Adultery; because the Adulterous Person has first violated that Union which God ordained to have been perpetual. Upon these things turns the whole Stress of *Christ's* Answer to the Jews. And from this Account which he has here given it manifestly appears, that this Original Institution did not only ordain, that the Union of Man and Wife shou'd be perpetual, but moreover that this Union shou'd be made between them two only, exclusive of all others whatsoever. And this God sufficiently signified by making but one Man and one Woman; which without all question, was designed to Illustrate and give Authority to this, as the true Purpose of the Law.

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3. And if this be the true meaning of that Divine Institution and Law, as I think I have shewn that it is: from hence it will be easie to prove,

4. Lastly, That Fornication is a manifest Transgression of the Law, and by consequence an Heinous Sin. For that Union which is founded in the Partnership of the Bed, and is thereupon declared to be Perpetual, and Inseparable, and Exclusive of all others; is as inconsistent with the rambling Amours of Fornicators as Light with Darknes. For at the same time that God ordaineth that all Persons who are so made one, shou'd preserve that Union Perpetually and Inviolably: In so doing he to all sufficient Intents and Purposes decrees, that no Persons shou'd so come together, but upon a Sincere Purpose, and Solemn Contract of Perpetual Union and Cohabitation between them two only, and exclusive of all others. What then can be more directly contrary to such a Law, than the Roving Loves of Fornicators? Who never intend, much less enter into a Solemn Contract, and Covenant of that Perpetual Cohabitation which God ordain'd. And who, instead of such mutual Constancy between them two only, exclusive of all others, only contrive to satiate their Lusts, like Brutes, without any Restraint, or any Regard to such an Ordinance. What is more evident, than that all such Practices are absolutely forbidden by this Law of God, and therefore offensive to him? The Purpose and Design of God in this Law I say was, not only to decree, that the Union between Man and Wife shou'd be perpetual: But also to ordain that no Man or Woman whatsoever shou'd so come together, but upon a Solemn Contract of that Perpetual and Inseparable Union first made.

And that I may not seem to assert any thing of this Nature without good Authority: I must here observe to you, that St. Paul says the same thing, and urges this same Consideration to this very purpose, and to dissuade Men from this very Sin, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16. *Shall I sake the Members of Christ*

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and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid. For know you not that he that is join'd to an Harlot is one Body? For two saith he shall be one flesh. In which Words it is evident and plain, that he alludes to this Original Institution of Marriage mentioned Gen. 2. 24. And that he makes the Union to consist in the Partnership of the Bed. *He that is join'd to an Harlot is one body. (i.e.)* is one flesh with her, as Man and Wife are one, and by that Union which God ordained to be the Foundation of perpetual and inseparable Cohabitation. And by this Consequence he declares, that they who thus come together without such a solemn Contract of Perpetual Union and Cohabitation; are certainly guilty of a Great Sin, and do what God has forbid, and what does not at all become Christians, and Members of *Christ's* Mystical Body. *Shall I take the Members of Christ and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid.* This is unlawful; this is contrary to God's Original Institution and Command. And if this be so, I think this is as clear a Proof of the Sinfulness of Whoredom, as if it had been expressly said in *Genesis*, *thou shalt not commit Fornication.*

And now let us reflect, how this one Argument alone discovers both the Sinfulness, and the Danger of this Practice. Suppose that we were in the dark as to the Evidences of Reason against this Sin, yet why shou'd not the Will and Institution of God influence and determine Mens Consciences? What better Proof can we have of any thing's being a Sin, than that it is a certain Violation of God's Express Commands and Laws? Or what Shadow of Reason can any Man produce why the Decree of God at our first Creation, confirmed by a new Sanction of *Christ*; shou'd not bind him to the Observance of it, as firmly as any the clearest Law of mere Nature only? Or why shou'd not the Danger of transgressing it be as great? To imagin that God will not exact Obedience to his Laws, is to charge him with Folly in enacting them. And if he will punish Transgressions and Sin; how

how will Leud Men deliver themselves out of his Hand? So that if Fornication be such a Violation of God's Institution and Law, as I think it already appears to be: This so plainly discovers the Sin and Danger of it; that I cannot see what Rational Hope these Men can entertain, but upon Repentance, of escaping his Vengeance for so vile a Transgression. But,

5. Lastly, I propos'd to consider the Objections that are commonly made against all this. The Sum of what they object against this Inviolable Union is, that *David*, celebrated for a Man after God's own Heart, not only committed Adultery with *Bathsbeba*, and murder'd her Husband; but also had many Wives at once, and might divorce them at his Pleasure; and consequently did not Live up to this Rule. That *Solomon* also, who is fam'd in the Old Testament for an inspired Gift of Wisdom from God: And *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful; and in short, all or most of the Ancient *Patriarchs*, are recorded to have had many Wives or Concubines. And why, say they, may not we think our selves innocent, and safe in the nonobservance of such an Institution: If the same was done by those very Persons, who are honour'd with the Titles of *Patriarchs*, and celebrated for their extraordinary Share in God's Favour?

And as for keeping Constant to those Wives or Concubines they chose, it is nothing so. Divorce was allowed, not only by the Heathens, but even by God's Laws given to the Jews, and that upon Small Dislike. And why, say they, shou'd we imagin any Sinfulness in that which God himself allowed?

And as for Fornication, they plead it has been held Lawful both by Heathens, Jews, and some Christians. The Heathens, say they, every where allow it, nor do we find the Jewish Law directly to forbid it. Why then shou'd we be frighted from so dear a Pleasure, by the Cavils of a Tribe of Men, whose Trade and Livelyhood it is to preach against us? This is the Sum of what they plead, and I think I have

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set down the Objections with all the Fairness and Advantage to their Cause, which they themselves can in Justice claim. Now if it shall appear, that there is nothing in all this, however plausible and promising it may look; that will either prove Fornication Harmless and Innocent, or exempt those who live in it, either from great Guilt or severe Punishment: This Objection will do them no good at all. And that this is the Truth of the Case, I doubt not will be very Evident.

The full Force of the Objection is drawn. 1. From the Practice of such Men as the Scripture celebrates for Holy Men. 2. From the Laws of Jews and other Nations, not strictly and severely forbidding this Vice, and binding Men up to the Strictness of this Law. But,

1. As for that Part of the Objection which is built upon their Remarks on the Actions of Good and Holy Men: I have often wonder'd that the Debauches of our Age, should ever mention *David's* Miscarriage with *Bathsheba*, as they do, to excuse and countenance them. For is it not as good an Instance to prove the Lawfulness of Murder and Treachery as of Adultery? Or is there any thing in that whole History that proves the Innocence of either? Is there not a plain Declaration both of God's heavy Displeasure for this Sin of *David's*, and also of his Signal Repentance? 'Tis true, *David* is called a *Man after God's own Heart*: But not for any such Action as this. For it is said expressly, *1. Sam. xii. 27. The thing that David had done displeased the Lord.* And God's Anger is at large declared against him in the xii. Chapter. All then that these Men can infer from hence is, that the best of Men, by the common Frailty of Human Nature, and for want of due Vigilance and Circumspection over themselves, may sometimes fall into very great Transgressions. The Consideration of which shou'd never be alleged for our Justification; but shou'd rather teach us to be the more Watchful and the less Censorious, and whenever Men do fall, it shou'd engage them to return to God by Repentance

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as *David* did. Without this, he had not been *the Man* after *God's own Heart*, but instead of that, had found the dire Effects of *God's Displeasure*, and heavy *Vengeance* against this Sin. And I would earnestly recommend it to all those who have been guilty of *David's Transgression*, to follow his Example in his Repentance, and Contrition, and Devout and Exemplary Humiliation.

As for the other Instances they mention of *Abraham*, and *Jacob*, and *Solomon*, and *Jephtha* that had Concubines, and yet are Characterized in Scripture for Good Men, and highly favour'd of God: I must observe one thing by the way, viz. That what the Scripture calls Concubines, were not Women that prostituted themselves, but such as they took upon a Solemn Contract and Covenant as Wives. And sometimes they are expressly so call'd. As particularly, Gen. xvi. 1. *Sarah had an Hand-maid, an Egyptian, whose Name was Hagar, and she gave her to her Husband Abraham to be his Wife.* And again, Gen. xxv. 1. *Abraham took a Wife, and her Name was Keturah.* And yet in Verse the 6th. she is called a Concubine, and also 1 Chron. 1. 32. To the better understanding of which it is remarkable, what a Jewish Doctor has said upon this Place, as a Reverend Father of our own Church has cited him out of Mr. Selden. *She was his Concubine because of her Servile Condition, but his Wife, because married with Covenants to provide for her and her Children.* So Grotius tells us, that they were such Servants, or others of a low Rank, whom they married upon Contract giving them a Dowry; and tho' their Children did not inherit, they had Portions allotted them out of their Father's Inheritance, and were inferior to other Wives, only in their Dignity, (i. e.) because they once were Servants. Agreeably to this worded, Gen. xxv. 5. *Abraham gave all that he had, (i. e.) the Sum of his Inheritance, to Isaac; but unto the Sons of the Concubines he had, he gave Gifts, and sent them away.* All therefore that can from hence be concluded is that Polygamy,

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or the having many Wives was then practis'd and allow'd. But this will make nothing at all for Fornication, there being a vast Difference between such a Married Concubine and a Common Prostitute. The most that can possibly from hence be drawn to their Advantage is, that these good Men and highly favour'd of God, did not observe the Law we mention in any such Sense as we now put upon it.

For a farther Answer therefore to this whole Objection, I would offer these three things to be seriously consider'd.

1. That tho' it shou'd be granted that Polygamy, Divorce, and even Fornication it self was tolerated by the Laws of the Heathens, Jews, or by the Customs of Ancient Times; it does by no means from hence follow that any of these were in themselves Innocent and without Offence to Almighty God.

2. That Fornication especially was never so tolerated by any of them, as thereby to be absolutely Approved; nor ever had so much Countenance, but that we may find clear Evidence of its being accounted an Hateful and Detestable Vice.

3. That whatever Connivance, Indulgence, or Exemption from Punishment God was pleas'd to grant upon the Transgression of this Law in Ancient Times; he has now Revoked, and made void all such, and brought us to the Original Institution. We are under a more Perfect Law, and a better Dispensation; and therefore we are justly tied up to stricter Rules as the indispensable Condition of Salvation. These things can be clearly made out, as I hope they may, no Just Countenance, or Excuse for this Wicked Practice can there be drawn from such Examples.

4. That tho' it shou'd be granted that Polygamy, Divorce, and even Fornication it self was tolerated by the Laws of Heathens, Jews, or by the Customs of Ancient Times; it does by no means from hence follow that any of these were

of themselves innocent, and without Offence to Almighty God. And that because none of these were perfect Rules for the Government of Life in all things exactly according to God's Will.

1. As to the Heathens, if we speak of their General Manners, and exempt the particular Virtues of some few Men: we know very well that they had deviated from the Ways of Truth and Virtue, and were fall'n into very great and abominable Corruptions. They scarce retained any Knowledge of the True God, and are therefore said to *live as without God in the World*, Eph. 2. 12. They had Gods many, but their Notions of them were so monstrously Vile and Gross: that instead of Restraining, they rather Tempted and Invited them to the most Flagitious Immoralities. If therefore such Men as these tolerated Whoredom and Adultery, and all Uncleanness: is their Conversation fit to be drawn into a President? How cou'd it be otherwise with them, unless their own Natural Modesty restrained them? They had the Examples of their very Gods to countenance them, and such Abominable Practices made up a chief Part of those Religious Rites with which they worshipped their Deities. For these things they were Abandoned of God, who in the Greatness of his Anger and Indignation withdrew from them that ordinary Grace which he wou'd always afford Mankind, and left them to themselves and the Lusts of their own Carnal Hearts. Rom. 1. 21. *&c. Because that when they knew God, they yet glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their Foolish Hearts were darkned: therefore God also gave them up to Uncleanness, through the Lusts of their own Hearts, to dishonour their own Bodies. And again, v. 26. For this cause God gave them up to Vile Affections. And v. 28. As they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge: God gave them over to a Reprobate Mind, to do those things that are not seemly, being filled with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness.* So that the Loose Practi-

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ces, and Corrupt Conversation of Men so far degenerated from the Principles of True Religion, are very unfit to be mentioned either for the Vindication, or the Excuse of Evils committed in a Christian State. But,

2. They perhaps may expect better Success in their Allegations from the Mosaical Law; because that is God's own, given to his chosen People to be a Rule to them. And if God himself tolerated any such Practices; is it not a Fair Inference from hence to conclude, that all such Practices are not in their Nature Sinful? I answer, no not at all; because the Law of *Moses* was Imperfect, and no Certain Absolute Standard to determin the true nature of Good and Evil. I do by no means grant that Fornication was allowed by that Law, but only supposing that it had, I say it could not from hence follow by any necessary Consequence that there was no Evil in it. And that because, tho' it was God's own Law given to *Moses* by the Ministry of Angels, for the Use of that People whom he had chosen out from the rest of the World: yet it was far from being a Compleat Rule for the good Government of Life, or from teaching Virtue in Perfection.

That Part of it which concerns Divine Worship establish't a Gross and Pompous Worship, which chiefly consisted in Shew; and was very different from that which is in it self most pleasing and best acceptable unto God. A Spiritual Worship is most agreeable to his Nature; for God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth. (i. e.) with Simplicity, and Sincerity of Heart; with a Pure and Holy Conversation; both which are inconsistent with Adultery, Fornication, and all manner of Leudness and Sensuality. Their Ceremonial Law, was rather to be their Guide to bring unto Christ; and by Figures and Representations to prepare them for the Gospel, or else as a means by Condescension, and humouring their Gross and Moody Tempers: to keep them from falling into Abominable Idolatry, and that more

Horrid

Horrid Leudness with which the Gentile World did notoriously pollute themselves.

As for the ten Commandments, or any other Part that concerned their Life and Manners; God 'tis true, forbid the most heinous, and highest Degrees of Impiety and Fornication among the rest as I shall shew by and by: but there were several things truly Good and highly Commendable in Religion; and several Evils, Hateful and Blameable before both God and Man, about which this Law was in great measure silent. Of these *Christ* has furnish'd us with several Instances. The Mosaical Law did expressly forbid only Murder, but our *Saviour* tells us that all Causeless and Immoderate Anger is offensive to God. That Law chiefly prohibited Perjury; But God detests also all Profaneness, by vain Swearing, and needless Imprecations, some Degrees of Revenge then were allowed; tho' God approves that we shou'd rather *forgive Injuries* and *love our Enemies*. And, which more nearly concerns the Case before us, the Mosaical Law expressly prohibits only Adultery, but God desires that we restrain both our Thoughts and Desires, and be *pure both in Heart and Mind*. So that the Silence of the Mosaic Law is no good Argument for any such Practice, that there is no certain Evil or Immorality therein. So far from it, that God himself upon the account of these Concessions and Permissions, which in a Prudential Regard to their Carnal Tempers he had made, says expressly that he *gave them Statutes that were not good*, Ezek. xx. 25.

That this is the Case of Divorce, *Christ* has assured us, *Matt. xix. 8. For the Hardness of your Hearts, God hath suffered you to put away your Wives, but from the beginning it was not so.* God's Allowance of this then manifestly appears not to have proceeded from either the Innocence or Indifference of this Practice; for he declares plainly that it was contrary to the Original Institution. *From the beginning it was not so.* But it was because he, who searcheth the Hearts, knew them

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to be a Subborn and Inflexible People, and who if they had not had this Permission, wou'd perhaps have fall'n into Murder or Adultery. God suffer'd this *for the Hardness of their Hearts*; It was always offensive to him, tho' of his Great Goodness and Compassion to Man's Weakness, he did then connive at it, which indeed is what wise and good Lawgivers are sometimes forced to do.

Grotius
de jure B.
& P. l. 2.
cap. v. § ix.

As to Polygamy, I find *Grotius* of Opinion, that that was not contrary to God's Original Institution, which he understands to have ordained that the Union, or Consociation of Married Persons shou'd be inseparable and perpetual: but not to enjoin the Marrying of one Person only. Either of these Opinions is absolutely against Fornication, for those who prostitute themselves, violate this Law in both respects. But yet I must confess my self not satisfied with this Account, nor with the Reason given for it, which is only this; because Polygamy was anciently so much in use among very good Men, from whence he wou'd conclude that it was not contrary to the Will of God. He owns that it was always *Deo gratissimum*, most agreeable to God's Will that one Man shou'd have but one Wife, but does not think that it was absolutely unlawful to have more, because very good Men had more. But with all due respect to his great Character, this does not satisfy me. And as I shall shew anon that it is no good Consequence on which he grounds this Opinion, so at present I have this Objection against it. That Divorce was as much in use under the Law, as Polygamy before it, nay more evidently permitted and allowed. And yet Divorce is as contrary to one Part of the Institution, as Polygamy to the other. And by consequence, it having been the Custom in some Ages for good Men, to marry more Wives than one, is no more a Proof that God's Original Law did not forbid it, than the Permission of Divorce will prove that this Law did not ordain an inseparable Union and perpetual Cohabitation. God who allowed the one
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under the Law, might for the same Reason connive at the other before the Law, and yet they might be both by a Dispensation of the Primitive Institution and Ordinance.

And that this is in truth the case, I think will be very plain, if we consider that it is from the words of Christ in this very same discourse, that Polygamy is now made unlawful under the Gospel. The question indeed was put by the Pharisees about Divorce: but our Saviour's Answer, by clear and necessary Consequence extends also to Polygamy. His words are these, *I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his*

Wife, except it be for Fornication, and shall Marry another, committeth Adultery. And he that Marrieth her who is put away, committeth Adultery. Now the Reason of all this is plain, if we suppose Polygamy, as well as Divorce, contrary to Gods first Institution: For then he that Marries a Woman Divorced, Marries her who by the Law of God is still esteem'd the Wife of her Husband; and this is Adultery. He that only puts away his Wife, is not said to commit Adultery; but *he that puts her away, and Marries another.* Divorce only may be a Sin, but it is the Marrying again that makes the Adultery. Of which the only good Reason to be given, is because it is not lawful to have more than one Wife.

Now when it shall again be consider'd, that all this part of our Saviour's Discourse is an Explanation, and Confirmation of this Original Institution and Law mentioned, v. 4, 5. *Have ye not read, that he which made them in the beginning, &c.* we must conclude, that Polygamy as well as Divorce is a Violation and Transgression of it.

This plainly shews, that whatever Permission of, or Connivance at these Practices may be observed in the Jewish Law, there are so many Imperfections in it, and Defects of that compleater Righteousness, which God now requires, and wou'd then, had that People been able to bear them.

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3. And this will teach us last of all, what Answer is to be given to that part of their Objection which is taken from the Example of *Abraham*, or any other of the *Patriarchs* before the Law of *Moses*; who, contrary to the purpose of this Institution, had many Wives or Concubines. The sum of whose case in short is this, that though they were noble Patterns of Faith and Obedience in those Trials, which God made of them, and blessed, and highly favour'd for their singular Confidence in him; yet they were not Patterns of Universal Righteousness, and of all Virtue and Goodness in Perfection.

Abraham had been brought up in an Idolatrous Country, God calls him out from it, and engages him to worship him alone, promising him great Blessings if he wou'd do so. *Abraham* believes Gods Promises, and obeys them; and God thereupon, for his Illustrious Faith, declares, that *in him all the Nations of the Earth shou'd be blessed*, by that *Messiah* which was to descend from him. Thus *Abraham* believed in *Christ*, and approved his Faith in the Resurrection from the Dead, by his readiness to sacrifice his Son in whom these Blessings were promised to him. These were eminent Instances of Confidence and Obedience, with which God was so well pleased, that he resolves to favour and bless him in an extraordinary manner. It is no where said in Scripture, that *Abraham* was perfect in his Righteousness, but that he believed God, and that was imputed to him for Righteousness. In other things then he lived according to the Customs and Manners of that Age in which he lived; among whom, it seems, that Polygamy and Divorce had now prevailed. And though God was not at all pleased with these Practices, nor did approve them; yet he was graciously pleased for the sake of his other Virtues, and particularly of this singular Faith, not to impute them to him, nor to punish them. This is all that can be observed from the case of the *Patriarchs*, which does by no means prove, that what they did was Innocent,

Jo viii. 56.
Heb. xi. 19.

Gen. xv. 6.

See Bishop
Patrick on
Gen. xv. 6.

or without Offence. The most that can be drawn from hence is, that God in Regard to the different Ages, and Dispensations under which Men live, has not always discovered to them what is best in it self, or most agreeable to his Holy Will. But no Practice, or Custom, or Manners of ancient times can be improved into a just Vindication of the Innocence of either Polygamy, or Divorce, and much less of Fornication; nor will any of these Examples prove that what has formerly been done against the purpose and design of this Original Institution, was for that reason free from guilt, or inoffensive to Almighty God. But,

Secondly, This Argument will yet have greater force, when we shall consider that we have now supposed more than is indeed to be granted. For however the case was as to Polygamy and Divorce, yet Fornication was never so tolerated as to be approved; nor ever had so much countenance, but that we have clear Evidence that it was always counted an hateful and detestable Vice.

And to make this out, it will be requisite to consider that there is a great deal of difference between *Licita*, and *Honesta*, (*i. e.*) between things tolerated in Governments to pass unpunish'd, and things in their Nature Innocent and without Evil.

This is a rational distinction, and founded on one of the *Maxims* of Civil Law; *Licetum dicitur quod Legibus non puni-* tor. In this sense every thing is *Licetum quod fit impune*; which the Laws have not prohibited with a Punishment. And whosoever shall consider the defects of all human Laws whatever, will soon see that they can be no certain Standard to distinguish the Good or Evil of Human Actions by. By the Law of the xii Tables the Creditors might divide the Insolvent Debtor's Body among them: It was tolerated, but common Reason will tell us how much against all Rules of Piety and Religion. Accordingly the Romans had a wise Distinction, *Non omne quod Licetum est, honestum est.*

Grot. de
Jure B. &
P. 342.

Every Digest.
Lib. i. Tit.
thing 17. §. 144.

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thing must not be esteemed Good and perfectly innocent; for the restraint of which the Laws make no good Provision by assigning Punishments. Governments may tolerate what Governors do by no means Allow and Approve. That therefore is in this Sense Lawful, which the Letter of the Law has not made Penal in the Offender, which may happen in many Cases against the Approbation and Good-Liking of the Law-giver. Thus it was in Divorce among the Romans, which was permitted by their Law, but we are told that it was not put in Practice for five hundred and twenty Years; their own Sense of the Turpitude of it proving to them an Effectual Restraint. Laws then may Tolerate, but Honesty ties us up to act by Principles and Offices of Humanity. I think therefore that it will be sufficient to my present Design to shew, that notwithstanding any Toleration of this wicked Practice among the Heathens, yet they were not insensible of the Turpitude and certain Immorality of it. By the Laws

Ter. A.
delph. A.
iv. Sc. 5.

M. Dacier
in Ter.

of the *Athenians* then, tho' Strangers (*i. e.*) Women of Foreign Countries were tolerated in this Practice, yet it was an Infamous and Flagitious Crime to corrupt one that was free-born, and the Offender who shou'd so transgress, was by the Law compell'd to marry her. For this reason *Perigrina* or a *Strange Woman*, was the usual and common Phrase for one that did thus prostitute her self. And for the same reason the Scripture seems to have used the same Language, *Judges xi. 2. Thou shalt not inherit in our Father's House for thou art the Son of a strange Woman.* Among the Romans, tho' *Cicero* in his Defence of *Calpurnius*, Excuses this Iniquity and says, *Quando hoc non factum? Quando reprehensum? Quando non permissum? &c.* Yet this indeed is but labouring to make the best of a bad Cause, in behalf of his Client; for in his Accusation of *Cataline* and his Morals, he makes it up a considerable Part of their Charge, that He and his Companions were *Aleatores, Adulteri, Impuri, impudici; Gamesters, Adulterers, Unclean, Unchast.* And again, *ut comestiones,*

Et scorta quarent, they hunt after Revels and Unchast Women. And how come so many sharp Reflections upon all such Manners: if there had not been some great Evil, some known certain Immorality therein? I will add but one Passage more out of Heathen Authors, and that I shall transcribe for its great Confirmation of the Difference between Lawful and Innocent things, on which I ground my present Argument. It is out of Porphyry de Abſtinentiâ, &c. his Words are these. *The Law does not forbid the Common People to have Harlots, but lays a Tax upon such Women for their Licence and Permission; and yet it is accounted unworthy & almost very reproachful and infamous for Men, unless it be done moderately Vertuous, to have any Conversation with such.* Which plainly shews that whatever prevailed among the Heathen to the Permission of such a Vice; was only Evil Custom, and Corrupt Practice introduced contrary to the Dictates of their Mind and their Natural Sense of Good and Evil.

As to the Jews, I am of Opinion that all Fornication was absolutely forbidden by their Law. For *Deut. xxiii. 17.* it is commanded, *There shall be no Whore of the Daughters of Israel.* And tho' I am not ignorant that some learned Interpreters understand this Place to speak of, and forbid any Israelitish Woman to prostitute her self in the Idolatrous Temples, as the Custom of some Gentiles was: yet as this Notion is chiefly raised from the *lxxii.* Paraphrastic Translation of these Words, so the Reason they allege for this Law comes up directly to our present Purpose, viz. that God wou'd have his own People to abstain from the Leudness and Uncleaness of the Gentiles, as well as from their Idolatry.

And if they were not allowed to commit Leudness with their own Women, much less with Strangers, because then the Danger was greater as well as the Sin, in that by their Sensual Communication they might be seduced to Revolt, and by their Leudness fall into Apostacy and Idolatry. Thus it happened in their Abode in the Wilderness, *Numb. xxv. 1, 2.*

Spencer de
Legibus
Hebræor.
& le Clerk.

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The People began to commit Whoredom with the Daughters of Moab, and thereby they call'd the People unto the Sacrifices of their Gods, and the People did eat and bowed down to their Gods. Which Aggravation of their Crime so incens'd God, that he sent a Plague among them. And Phinehas, in a singular Fit of Zeal, slaying one of their own Princes and the Midianish Woman caught in that Fault, was app'auded and approved of God, whose Indignation was thereby appeased, and a Covenant of an Everlasting Priesthood given to Phineas on that Account. And it is remarkable that St. Paul alluding to this Passage, charges the Guilt upon their Fornication. 1 Cor. x. 8. *Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one Day three and twenty thousand.* And to make appear that I have now put no stricter meaning upon the Jewish Laws than they themselves allowed and profess'd: I shall give you one Passage which Grotius has transcribed out of Philo in *vitâ Josephi*. Other Nations, says he, are allowed after fourteen Tears of age in Cells and Stews to defile themselves with Women that are Prostitutes for Gain: but we are not allowed any such. With us Death is the Punishment denounced against her that shall prostitute her self. So that before Lawful Marriage we have no Communication with Women; but but come pure and chaste to the Marriage of pure Virgins; not meerly to please our Lusts, but for the Increase of our Offspring.

In Matt.
v. 31.

2^d Titus
gives.

And as to the Ages before the Law, I shall only mention the Action of Simeon and Levi, who when Shechem had defiled Dinah their Sister: slew not only him, but all his People, and plunder'd their City, and vindicated this extraordinary Vengeance, by the Notorious Heinousness of the Crime committed; *shou'd be deal with our Sister as with an Harlot* ? Gen xxxiv. 31.

So unfit then are the Licentious Practices of former Times to be drawn into a President, or to be alleged for the Vindication, or Extenuation of this Vice: that upon a little Observation we may easily discover what a Lively Sense all Mankind

kind both Jews and Gentiles, both before and after the Law, have had, of its being an Hateful, Infamous, and Detestable Practice.

I have one Step farther yet to go, for

3. Lastly. It must be consider'd too, that whatever Dispensation or Connivance God was pleas'd to grant in former Times to this his first Law, and Original Institution: he has now Revok'd and Repeal'd all such by the Gospel, and bound us up to his Primitive Ordinance. Divorce it is confess'd he did permit; not by Choice, but for the *Hardness of their Hearts* to whom that Law was given. Polygamy he did at most but Connive at, not directly Tolerate or Allow. *And from the beginning it was not so:* there is the manifest Evidence of his great Dislike of it. And now he says, *whom God hath Joined together let no Man put Asunder:* There's the Revocation of all former Indulgence and Connivance; and a Reestablishment of the first Law in its ancient and primitive force. Thus God at first decreed that Man shou'd live. And however those in an Obscure Light have gone astray; we Christians are now once more brought back to God's first Rule, and must walk by it without any such wilful Deviations: or we have no just Hope of the Mercy of God, and the Salvation of our Souls by Jesus Christ. And whatever we may observe either Practis'd or Countenanced, either before or under, or after the Jewish Law: we must say of it as St. Paul did of the Idolatry of the Gentiles, *1st. xvii. 30. The Times of that Ignorance God winked at, but now hath commanded all Men every where to repent: in that he hath appointed a Day in which he will judg the World by Jesus Christ, who has brought us out of that Darkness into his Marvellous Light.*

It is therefore Preposterous, and vain for us to shelter our selves under the Examples and Customs of any Ages, or Persons that have been before us. We are under a Better, and Nobler Dispensation of Grace, and therefore we are tied up to Stricter Rules, and Nobler Degrees of Virtue. Our Reli-

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gion teaches a more Compleat and Perfect Scheme of Universal Righteousness ; and therefore it admits none of these Exemptions, Defects, and Imperfections, which are found in other Laws. Ours gives us a better Hope, and promises us a more exceeding great and glorious Reward, than any other Religion ever did : And therefore it gives no Tolerati-
on of any wilful Offence, but requires us to perfect Holiness, and conform to the whole Will of God in every thing that is Commendable and Good.

Did not God, when he vouchsaf'd to *Abraham* those extraordinary Manifestations of his Will, by the Ministry of Angels ; instruct him in the full Sense of this Law also ? It was because he reserv'd this, with the other more perfect Manifestation of our Duty, till the Revelation of his whole Will by *Jesus Christ* ; thro' whom also he intended a fuller Discovery of that future Recompence, which might Encourage and Invite us to aspire towards that exalted Degree of Purity and Goodness. And hence also it was, that in the Law of *Moses* there were found so many Tolerations of things not at all Pleasing to, or Approved by Almighty God. It was Agreeable to the Hardness of their Stubborn Hearts, and the present Felicity of this Transient Life, which their Law promised, and at which they chiefly aimed : but not to those Diviner Spirits that *live by Faith*, and in a Prospect of Eternal Bliss, *have their Conversation now in Heaven*. Did that God then indulge them, who has now restrained us ? Their Indulgence was *after the Law of a Carnal Commandment* : And our Restraint is *after the Power of an Endless Life*. Let not then the corrupt Practices, and loose Conversation of former Times, become a Snare and a Temptation to you ; and allure you to the Imitation of bad Examples, and an Authority that will not justify you. I shall conclude this Head with *St. Paul's* Words, *Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19, 20. This I say then and testifie in the Lord, that ye walk not henceforth as other Gentiles walk in the Vanity of their Mind, having their Under-*
standing

standing darkned, being Alienated from the Life of God thro' the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Heart. Who being past Feeling have given themselves over unto Lasciviousness to work all Uncleaness with Greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the Truth is in Jesus. That Holy Profession requires from you a quite different Conversation. And this brings me to what I proposed

II. Secondly ; Which was to prove the Greatness of this Sin from Christian Principles, by shewing how contrary this Practice is to the Precepts and Commands of God in the Gospel of *Jesus Christ* ; and how absolutely inconsistent with all sound Hope of Mercy and Salvation thro' him. And here I shou'd have a very easie Task, if Men had but a due Veneration and Esteem for that Faith into which they have been baptized. But the Misery is, that there is so much Coolness, Lukewarmness, and Indifference in Religion ; that neither the Laws, nor the Threatnings, nor the Promises of the Gospel, make a due Impression on Mens Minds. So that they can hear the Vengeance of God denounced against their Sins, and yet not tremble ; and Death, and Hell, and Eternal Burnings threatned, and yet not be afraid. They read God's Solemn Declarations of punishing all impenitent Sinners, *with Everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord* ; and yet, by I know not what Mysterious Arts, flatter themselves, that they shall escape, and find Uncovenanted, Unpromised Grace and Mercy at the last. And what shall we do when *the Terrors of the Lord*, with which *St. Paul* used to *persuade Men*, have lost their Force ; and the severest Threatnings of Divine Vengeance come to be despised ? Among Primitive Christians, Faith was strong, their Love sincere and cordial, and their Zeal affectionate and warm. Then Men did so believe the Gospel, as to receive it as the Guide of their Consciences, and the Rule of their Lives ; and the

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the only Foundation of their Hope, and Expectations of Salvation. Then they so desir'd that Celestial Recompence which God has promised, as to be willing to come up to the most exalted Degrees of Goodness, that they might attain to it; and so dreaded, and trembled at the least Apprehensions of his Displeasure, as with a Scrupulous and Conscientious Care to avoid and abhor every thing that is by him forbidden and discountenanced.

Were such an Heart and such a Spirit in us, it wou'd be easy from a very few Texts of the New Testament to baffle all the vain Apologies and Excuses for this Hateful Sin. For,

1. It is expressly forbidden, and the *Apostles* do in a very earnest and affectionate manner dehorth and dissuade all Christians from it. *Christ* in his Discourses with the *Jews*, declared what was God's Original Purpose and Intention at the first Creation; and the *Apostles* in the very first of all their Constitutions and Decrees, when assembled together in Council at *Jerusalem*, peremptorily prohibit this Vice, *Act. xv. 28, 29.* *It seemed Good to the Holy Ghost, and to us to lay upon you no greater Burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from Meats offer'd unto Idols, and from Blood, and from things strangled, and from Fornication.* Where by the way we have a clear Argument to prove that Fornication was esteem'd contrary to the *Jewish* Law.

For the Question in debate was, how far the *Gentile* Converts shou'd comply with the Customs and Manners of the *Jews*. And this is the Result of the Debate, that they shou'd abstain from the Pollutions of Idols, and from Fornication; and from things strangled, and from Blood. Which is as much as tho' it had been said, we require from you no greater Compliance to the Law of *Moses* than in these particular things.

But some Scruples may possibly arise concerning the Pertinency of this Sanction to our present Purpose; in that it's here joined with some things that were not in themselves evil and sinful; but only prohibited to prevent Offence and

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Scandal to the *Jews*. Such is their Abstinence from *things strangled and from Blood*; the eating of which, is not in itself a Sin, tho' it were forbidden by the *Jewish Law*.

To remove this seeming Difficulty, it will be necessary to look a little closer into the true purpose and Design of this Apostolical Decree. To the right understanding of which, we must observe, that when the *Apostles* thought fit not to impose the Jewish Ordinances upon the *Gentile* Converts; they had yet some evil and corrupt Opinions to provide against. The *Gentiles* had been taught that tho' they were Vile and Flagitious Persons that did prostitute themselves to others; yet that 'twas not a Sin to use such. And as *Grotius* observes, tho' the Apostles found it easy to convince the *Gentiles* in Matters of Divine Worship, and Common Honesty: yet the Prejudices of their former corrupt Conversation stuck so fast upon them, that they were not easily brought up to this Noble Degree of Christian Purity. To oppose which Prejudice they expressly prohibit Fornication by this unanimous Command.

Another Opinion of theirs was, that seeing all Creatures of God are in themselves good, and were created for the Benefit of Men, therefore they thought it was lawful for them to eat all Meat whatsoever, and wheresoever they found it. And in their full Persuasion of the Innocence of this Liberty; they made no Scruple to be present at the Heathen Idolatrous Feasts; and under that Pretence communicated with them in Idolatry. This therefore the *Apostles* absolutely forbid.

And though this which they alledged might possibly be a good Argument for their not abstaining from *things strangled, and from blood*; yet the *Jews* having a certain Tradition, that these things were forbidden before the Law of *Moses*, and had been held unlawful ever since the days of *Noah*; they could not be satisfied that they were innocent. And therefore in compliance to their Persuasion and Opinion, the *Apostles*

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Apostles restrain the *Gentiles* in the use of that liberty, in those two cases; to give no Offence unto the *Jews*. So that they had a two-fold end in this their Sanction. And though some of these things were forbidden, upon Prudential Considerations, and to prevent Offences; Fornication was one of the Real Evils and prohibited for its great and certain Immorality.

And to evidence the Truth of this, do but consider, after what an earnest and affectionate manner, *St. Paul* dissuades from this notorious Vice, 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10. he addresses himself with a great deal of Zeal, as to Men that were yet unwilling to believe that there was any great evil, or danger in this Practice; and he warns them to have a care of this Delusion. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* And again, 13, 14, &c. *Now the body is not for Fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Know you not that your bodies are the Members of Christ? Shall I then take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid. What, know you not, that he that is join'd to an Harlot, is one body? For two, saith he, is one flesh; but he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit. Therefore flee Fornication, every other Sin that a Man doth is without the body; but he that committeth Fornication, sinneth against his own body.* Again, *Gal.* v. 19, 20, 21. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleaness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, and such like, of which I tell you before as I have told you also in time past; that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And *Eph.* v. 3, 5, 6, 7. *But Fornication, and all Uncleaness, or Covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh Saints. For this you know, that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Person, nor covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ*
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and of God. And then he alludes to the delusive Notions, whereby they did excuse and extenuate this Vice. *Let no Man deceive you with vain Words, for because of these things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience. Be ye not therefore Partakers with them.* And Col. iii. 5, 6. *Mortify therefore your Members which are on the Earth, Fornication, Uncleaness, Inordinate Affection, Evil Concupiscence and Covetousness which is Idolatry. For which things sake the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Disobedience.* Where the Apostle declares, that whatever Pleas Men may allege, these are all hateful Sins, and such which provoked the Indignation of God even against the Heathens themselves; and therefore Christians are under greater Obligations to abstain from them. *1 Thes. iv. 3, 4, 5, 7. This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification that you shou'd abstain from Fornication, That every one of you shou'd know how to possess his Vessel in Sanctification and Honour; not in the Lusts of Concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God; for God hath not call'd us to Uncleaness, but to Holiness, and Heb. xiii. 4. Marriage is honourable, and the Bed undefiled, but Whoremongers, and Adulterers God will Judge.* 'Tis the Charge against the Church of Pergamos, that it was Corrupt, and had them there *that hold the Doctrin of Baalam, who taught Balac to cast a Stumbling Block before the Children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto Idols, and to commit Fornication, Rev. 2. 14.* And against the Church of Thyatira; that it *suffer'd the Woman Jezabel, which calleth her self a Prophetess, to teach and seduce my Servants to commit Fornication: And I gave her Space to repent of her Fornication, and she repented not: upon which follow several severe Threatnings of God's heavy Judgments; in case they were not seasonably prevented. And Rev. xxi. 8. The Fearful, and Unbelievers, and Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters shall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the Second Death.*

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Now after such numerous Declarations, and so great a Cloud of Witnesses; with what Countenance, and on what Grounds can Men conceit their roving Pleasures innocent, or free from the extremest Danger of everlasting Condemnation? These Texts are so positive, so plain, so intelligible, and so express; that I cannot but wonder how those who retain any Reverence for the Gospel of *Christ*, can pretend to any Hope of Salvation by it, while they continue in this Sin.

II. The Reasons which *St. Paul* here alleges do farther shew that this Practice must be both Offensive and Dangerous.

1. He answers the most plausible Suggestion that was pleaded by the *Corinthians* for the Vindication of it. They pleaded that their Bodies were their own; and that every Man was so far Lord of himself, that it was in his Power and Right to use it as he pleas'd. To which *St. Paul* replies No; their Bodies were not so absolutely their own, nor had they any such incontrollable Authority, or Dominion over them. God that made them, and with Divine Wisdom contriv'd their Frame, had a better, and more Natural Right than they; And by Virtue of that, might lay upon them what Restraints he shou'd think convenient. Their Bodies too when by Sin become Mortal, and subject to Corruption, are Redeemed by the Blood of *Christ*, and entitled to Immortality again. And *Christ* by Virtue of the Price which he paid for them on the Cross, has a Title in, and a just Authority over them. So that the Foundation of this Pretence is delusive and vain. As Creatures of God we must be subject to his Dominion, and as the Redeemed of *Christ* we must receive from him what Laws, Injunctions and Commands he pleases. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a Price; therefore glorifie God both in your Body and in your Spirit, which are God's Right and Property.* And this is the very same thing that he urged, v. 13, 14. *Now the Body is not for Fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the Body.*

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i. e. *Christ* was raised from the Dead, that he might raise us also to Immortality: and therefore we are bound *not so live unto our selves*, by giving up our Bodies to Pleasure in the Lusts of the Flesh; but to devote our selves to the Service of that Great God who made us, and to the Obedience of *Christ*, who died to expiate our Guilt.

2. He argues in the next place, from the great Uncomeliness and Indecency of this Practice, in Consideration of our close and near Relation to *Christ*, v. 15, 16. *Know you not that your Bodies are Members of Christ, shall I then take the Members of Christ and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid, &c.* In which Words he declares what our Liturgy has truly and properly express'd; that we *Christians* are one with *Christ*, and *Christ* with us. And that Union is not only in the way of Polity Ecclesiastical, as we are Members of his Church, and intitled to the Spiritual Privileges and Offices thereof: but in a much Nobler and Diviner Sense, He has taken upon him our Flesh, and he has communicated to us his Spirit; and this Spirit is the Bond and Medium of that Unity betwixt us. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. And as the Soul of Man is the Foundation of Life, and of Vital Union in all the Members of the Body; so is the Spirit of God the Foundation and common Principle of Spiritual Life and Grace in all true Christians whatsoever. And as certainly as *Jesus Christ* has taken on him our true and real Flesh; so certainly has the same *Christ* communicated to us of that Holy Spirit which abides in him. For which reason our Apostle says, v. 17. *He that is join'd to the Lord is one Spirit with him*, and Rom. viii. 9. *If any Man hath not the Spirit of God, he is none of his.*

Now having instructed the *Corinthians* in this Doctrine, he recommends it to their own Serious Consideration, how Unseemly, and Shameful, and Unworthy it is, for Men in so near a Relation to God, and so close an Alliance to the Son of God, to have Fellowship and Union with the most

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Infamously Vile and Detestable of all Human Creatures. *Shall I take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid.* This is an Evil that ought not to be done. This is scandalous and abominable. He appeals to the common Sentiments of Mankind. It must be preposterous and absurd to pretend Union with *Christ*, and to profess that Union, the Foundation of our Hope of Mercy and Salvation by him: and at the same time to consociate with the most hateful of all Creatures, by a Vice forbidden under the Penalty of everlasting Condemnation. The very Nature of God, who is *Holiness*, and *Light*, and in whom there is no *Darkness* at all, is a sufficient Proof how disagreeable all such sinful Practices are, how offensive, how hateful, and how dangerous.

3. He argues from the great Dishonour which a Man does hereby to his own Body. He debases and reproaches himself. He becomes *one Flesh* with such a Person, as he is ashamed to own his Relation to; and for which all Mankind besides will despise him, tho' he does not scorn, and loath himself. He becomes in every sense polluted and defiled. *Every other Sin that a Man doth is without the Body, but he that committeth Fornication sinneth against his own Body.* The Prophane is injurious to God, and the Fraudulent to his Brother, and the Mischief of all other Sins falls first at a distance from ones self. But the Mischief of Fornication falls more immediately on the Offenders own Head; his own Body is debased in the very Trespass he has committed.

Nay the Apostle has improv'd this Consideration from the former; and tells us, that by the Residence of that *Holy Spirit* within us; our Bodies are so honour'd by Almighty God, as to be esteem'd and valued as his *Temples*, Places of his Residence, dedicated to his Use, and devoted to his Service, *v. 19. Know you not that your Bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and which you have of God.*

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And again, 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know you not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.* From whence he takes occasion to warn them of the Danger of dishonouring of themselves by Fornication; because, v. 17. *If any Man defile the Temple of God, him will God destroy: For the Temple of God is holy, which Temples are ye.*

These are the Arguments which St. Paul makes Use of to convince and to dissuade all Christians from this Vice. These indeed are Christian Arguments, founded upon Christian Doctrines, and Spiritual Reflections, but of very great Force, and not at all to be despis'd:

For this Union with Christ, by the means of his Spirit, is one of the great Priviledges of a Christian; one of the great Benefits of our Redemption; and our only Hope of Mercy and Peace, and Comfort, and Reconciliation thro' his Blood. Does then Fornication break off this close Alliance with Christ, destroy this Union? that is to the Soul in a Spiritual Sense, like lopping off an Arm or a Leg from the natural Body. 'Tis alienating the Man from Christ, and cutting off all his Hope of Reconciliation in him. 'Tis in effect rejecting him from the Covenant of Grace; and blotting out his Name from the Book of Life.

Again, does St. Paul say, that by *Fornication a Man dishonoureth his own Body*, and *defileth those Temples* which God has consecrated to himself, to be the Habitations of his Holy Spirit. God, who has punish'd the Pollutions of his Temple at *Jerusalem*, with the Death of the profane Offender, will certainly punish the defiling these living Temples with Eternal Death, and the most dire Effects of his severest Vengeance and Indignation. Besides, in defiling the Habitation of God's Holy Spirit, we must *grieve that Spirit*, and resist, and repel it, and drive it away from the intended place of its Residence and Abode. And how can a Practice be either innocent or safe: that so provokes our God, that we become abandon'd of the true Principle and Foundation of all Grace,
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Spiritual Life, and Sanctification? Especially, when *St. Paul* has so solemnly declar'd, *That if any Man have not the Spirit of God he is none of his.* But to add yet more force to these Considerations, consider,

III. *Lastly*, That this Sin in particular is absolutely inconsistent with those Qualifications which the Gospel requires from us, as the indispensable Condition of Salvation. To this purpose we all know very well, that when *Christ* came into the World to redeem Mankind from Eternal Death, he at the same time intended to destroy the Power of Sin in us, and call us back from the Perpetration of those Iniquities, which had been the Original Occasion of our Misery. For this reason, together with his Promises of Grace, Mercy and Peace; he has added several Holy Precepts and Commands, and strict Injunctions, and Rules of living well; which every one who comes into this Covenant, and desires to be a Partaker of this Hope, is bound to observe. And that we might have a due and deep Sense of the Necessity of this Obedience: he has inserted it into our Covenant, and made it the Indispensable Condition of his Promises, without which we have no Hope, no Title to any of the Blessings, Benefits, or Comforts of the Gospel.

Now among the several Qualifications which the Gospel on this Account requires from us; there are those two eminently recommended, and strictly exacted, that we should be *Pure*, and that we should be *Holy*. So that a sincere Christian needs no better Argument, no stronger Proof of the Greatness of this Sin, and the danger that attends it; than to consider with himself how contrary it is to, and how utterly inconsistent with both these Qualifications.

I. We are commanded to be *Pure*, *Mat. v. 8. Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* And it was *St. Paul's* Advice to *Timothy*, *1 Tim. v. 22. Keep thy self pure.* And *Phil. iv. 8.* there are recommended to us, *whatever things are pure:* and *St. John* declares both the Nature, and the Necessity

sity of this Purity. *He that hath this Hope in him, must purifie himself as God is pure, 1 Joh. iii. 3.* Now this word Pure, in its natural and proper Signification, denotes the being without any Mixture, that may make a thing worse than it is in it self. The Vessel is said to be pure that is without Soil or Taint, and the Wine is said to be pure that is neither muddied by its own Lees, nor by any Adulteration. From hence it is used in a Moral and Religious Sense, for being without those Pollutions and Defilements which make us hateful, and unacceptable to our God. And tho' under the Law, and among the Superstitious Heathens, there were many External Defilements; yet in the true, proper, Gospel Sense, nothing pollutes, nothing makes us unclean, and unacceptable to God, but what is a Sin, contrary to his pure Nature, and makes us unfit for his Divine Conversation in Heaven.

All Sin whatever does thus corrupt, and defile, and pollute us; yet it is remarkable, that this sensual Vice is particularly singled out, as one of those that has an extraordinary Malignity in this Respect. And the repeated Mention of Uncleanness, that so frequently occurs in the New Testament, is directly levell'd at Adultery, Fornication, and all unlawful Lusts. Thus *St. Paul* speaking particularly of the abominable Lewdness of the Romans, says of them, *Rom. i. 24.* that God gave them up to *Uncleanness through the Lusts of their Hearts.* And *2 Cor. xii. 21.* he speaks of those who had not repented of their *Uncleanness, Fornication and Lasciviousness, which they had committed.* For this reason they are joyn'd together, *Gal. v. 19.* The Works of the Flesh are these, *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness.* And *Col. iii. 5.* *Fornication, Uncleanness, Inordinate Affection, and evil Concupiscence.* These are the Defilements, and Pollutions, which destroy that Purity, that *Christ* has made the Indispensable Condition of our seeing God. And in the Language of the New-Testament to be Pure is to be Chaste; and Chastity is the Virtue very often particularly intended when the Gospel speaks of Purity.

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2. We are commanded also to be Holy ; and Holiness is expressly declared to be that qualification *without which no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14.* Now in whatever it is that this Holiness consists ; it is observable, that to avoid, and abstain from Fornication makes up one necessary part of it. This is undeniably evident from St. Paul, *1 Thes. iv. 3, &c. This is the Will of God*, or that which he requires from you as the great evidence of *your Sanctification* ; *That you should abstain from Fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel, or body, in Sanctification and Honour.* If therefore the true notion of Holiness, shall be found to consist in a Discrimination and Separation from the rest of the World by a nearer relation to God, and a more particular Devotion to his Worship and Service ; it will follow, that Gods certain Purpose and Design, when he made our Sanctification to oblige us to abstinence from that Vice, was thereby to declare, that we should Discriminate and Distinguish our selves from the rest of Mankind throughout all the Earth by stricter Rules of Chastity, and a more eminent degree of Purity in all our Conversation. And all Pretensions to the True, Christian, Evangelical Holiness, are vain and frivolous, and trifling in any Man, who lives still in *Fornication*. That Uncleanliness is for the Gentile World, who live in Darkness, and are given up to the Lusts of their own Hearts. *But we have not so learned Christ ; We are a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, a Peculiar People, beloved and favoured, and elected of God ; that we should show forth the Praises of him, who hath call'd us out of Darkness into his marvellous Light.*

1 Pet. 2. 9

It is therefore no excuse for us to look back upon the corrupt Conversation of former times, and the effects of more inferior and imperfect Dispensations. For the matter is come to this last issue, whether *Jesus Christ* into whose Name we have been baptiz'd, be indeed our Saviour, in whom is all our hope of Mercy and Everlasting Peace ; or whether we

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look for Salvation in any other? If not, it concerns us to receive his Gospel as the rule both of Faith and Manners; to suffer its Doctrines to determine our Consciences and Judgments; and its Precepts and Commands to guide and direct our Lives. Whatever other Men do, we must *cleanse our selves from all Impurity both of Flesh and Spirit*; we must *abstain from fleshly Lusts, and flee Fornication*; or we shall not *inherit the Kingdom of God*. While any Man continues in this wicked Practice, he is void of Grace, and of the Holy Spirit of God, and of that Evangelical Purity and Holiness without which no Man shall see the Lord. I proceed therefore

III. *Lastly*, To speak a little of the natural Turpitude of this Sin, and the mischievous Evils and Consequences that attend it. And were Men but sincere and impartial in their Enquiries into Truth, it were easie to shew that this Law of God in the Institution of Marriage in all the parts of it is founded on sound and good Principles of Reason.

Divorce countenances the imperious humours of ill natured Men, and gives encouragement to them to make quarrels and dissensions with the first Wife, whenever new Charms shall inflame them to desire a Second. Polygamy divides that Love which ought to be entire, and must and will inevitably be attended with that unequal Partiality towards one, which will bring the others into contempt and hatred. And the Jealousie of Rivals upon such occasions, must needs bring Divisions, and Distractions to a Family.

But our present business is only with Fornication. And to shew that all the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel, have their Foundation in the real difference between good and evil, and are in themselves Beneficial and Profitable to Men; let it be consider'd whether the Dignity, and Honour of humane nature, is not concern'd in our abstinence from this wicked and enormous Vice. Wherein is it that Man excells Brutes, and becomes in any respect a nobler and better, not

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to say, also a Diviner Creature? Is it not in the more valuable faculties of the Soul? In an over-ruling Will, and a capacious Understanding; in the power of Thought and Reason, to which all inferior Passions and Affections were at first created in a due and orderly Subjection. And does not to this day the true difference of our Natures consist in this; that Reason is the ruling Principle in us, and Appetite in them? By which we become capable of better, and nobler Actions; of Communion with God in Heaven, and a Conversation more Divine?

How then shall we vindicate the Dignity of our Diviner Nature, but by keeping up the Dominion and Superiority of our Reason over the vile Affections and Inclinations of the Body? Or in what can we more Dishonour or Debase our selves, than in subjecting the noble Faculties of the Soul, to the Tyrannic, Usurped power of our depraved Appetites and Lusts? And does not every wicked Man in Fornication and sensual Uncleanness do this? Does Reason prevail? Does Conscience, or does Lust bear sway in him, who gives himself up to the conduct of his loose and sensual Desires? To follow the impulse of vile Affections, and Inclinations; and without restraint Debauch and Prostitute himself at the Infrigation of his carnal Appetites? What is this but to Dishonour his Nature, level himself with Beasts, degenerate into a Brute that has no Understanding; and reproach both the Wisdom and Goodness of God who made him of a nobler shape and frame? So that if Men would think seriously, and without partiality; it were easie from the Principles of Reason, and Natural Religion, as well as of Revelation, to discover that this is a shameful and detestable Vice.

But it will appear yet more odious, if we give our selves the trouble of but a few short Reflections, on the mischievous and pernicious Consequences that attend it.

1. *First* then consider the unhappy calamitous fate of that spurious brood that happens to be born by this Vice, Shame, Infamy,

Infamy, and great Disgrace; tho' the least of all these Evils, are such as the wise Heathens had very deep and lively Apprehensions of. To this purpose Plutarch in his Treatise of the Good Education of Children, has these Words.

That they who desire to have Children well esteemed and of Good Repute ought by no means to cohabit with common Women that prostitute themselves. For they who either by Father or Mother are infamously born, will have that indelible Infamy attend them all their Life long, and be a ready occasion always at hand to every one

that has a Mind to affront and reproach them. But indeed this Evil does not affect only the Character and Credit of the Children so born: but sometimes it becomes a means of infecting their Bodies, and shortning their Lives; while they labour under Calamitous Infirmities, and bring Rottensness, and Abominable Putrefaction into the World with them.

Nay sometimes the Son of Fornication falls an early Sacrifice to conceal his Mothers Shame: and as one great Evil too commonly is followed by another, this enormous Vice often becomes the Introduction to Unnatural Murder. And he who begets such an Illegitimate Child, is inevitably injurious and unjust to his own Offspring; in that by the Baseness of his Birth, he is cut off from all Title or Claim to the Inheritance of his Father's Fortune and Honour: which by the Original Laws of God and Nature, the Offspring of Man should have a Right and Title to.

And indeed what farther Evidence can we have of the Hateful and Detestable Apprehensions which all Mankind in all Ages ever had of this Enormous Practice, than this? That the Children of Fornication have in all civiliz'd Governments been Neglected and Disregarded; nor allow'd any Pretence of Title or Claim to the Inheritance of their Father. These very Laws and Constitutions of almost all Nations of the World, are a most Certain and Irrefragable Proof that this Vice always was detested and abhorr'd by them?

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And yet there is a worse, and far greater Calamity that commonly attends the unhappy Children of such Ungodly Parents. And that is, that either the want of Natural Affection or Shame, and a Conscioufness of Guilt in the Parents occasion a certain Neglect and Disregard of the Childrens Virtuous and Religious Education. And every one that seriously considers the mighty Influence which Education has to make Men either Good or Bad, must confess that the Mischief of this Neglect is very deplorable and much to be lamented. This for ought we know might be one great End and Purpose of God in the Original Law and Institution of Marriage. By sanctifying which State, and ordaining that Union to be inseparable and perpetual, he lays so firm and Rational a Foundation for each Parents Affection to their Children, as will always oblige them to be careful and solicitous for their good. And that which seems much to favour this Conjecture, is, That God most certainly did provide, not only for the Propagation and Increase of Mankind: but also that it might be in such a manner as might best secure their being trained up in the Knowledge of him. And as might most strongly oblige their Parents to instruct them in that Virtue and Piety, which will at last bring them to the Eternal Happiness and Glory for which they were Originally designed.

And yet however necessary this good Education is in the Judgment both of God and Man: it is morally impossible that the Children of Fornication shoud be Religiously brought up. Oftentimes either the Poverty, or the Shame of the Parents, cause them to be exposed in the Streets, and consequently to be put out by the Parish where they are found. And in such a Case they are thought to fare well, if the Nurse to whose Care they are committed, supplies them with Food and Raiment; but few or none think themselves concern'd in the Good of the Child's Soul, and to teach it better Principles than its Parents had. Nor is it easie to imagine
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that the Parents themselves shou'd do much better in this Affair. It may be they have not yet repented of their own Iniquity: and if not, it is hard to believe that they shou'd have any great Zeal to implant Grace in others, who stifle and extinguish it in themselves.

But suppose they have; how will they set about a Work that shall bring afresh into their Minds all the Shame, and Terror, and Confusion that first followed the Commission of that Sin? The Sense of their own Shame will stop their Mouths, and the Rebukes of their Consciences Divert their Purpose, and Prevent their Good Design. So that tho' other Parents may be careless and negligent in the Instruction and Tuition of their Children; these lie under almost a Fatal and Inevitable Necessity of this Neglect. And who knows what great, what irreparable, and it may be Everlasting Mischiefs this one Calamitous Misfortune may be the Cause of? Or how little is it to be wondred at, if such a Shameful Spurious Brood inherit the Vices of their Parents, and become Persons of Reprobate Minds, and given up to Vile Affections and abominable Lusts? What is to be expected from such wicked Practices, but a Propagation of Vice and Naughtiness, and an horrid Increase in great Iniquities: that without some extraordinary Operation of Divine Grace and Mercy brings the whole Generation to Everlasting Misery and Torments?

These are Notorious Instances of the lamentable Evils, and Mischievous Consequences of this Sin. But,

2. The Mischiefs of it falls oftentimes upon the Offenders themselves as well as upon their Offspring and Posterity. And that in the first Place in their Credit and Character, and Reputation. As to Female Prostitutes they even by the Heathens themselves have ever been esteemed the most Infamous and Profligate. And tho' Men are generally of a less tender Fame and Credit, yet so inseparable and unalienable is Shame from Sin and:

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and Vice, that neither the Commonness of the Practice, nor the Authority of great Examples, nor all the Pleas and Apologies that are alleged for its Excuse, can give it Credit and Reputation. And those who are almost ready to be Advocates for it, yet in the Commission of it are generally solicitous to be conceal'd, and that not only from the Sober and Pious and Grave; but from others of the same ill Life and Conversation. And many of these who have made a shift to harden their Hearts, and sear their Consciences against the Guilt of it, find it yet very difficult, after all, to harden their Foreheads too against the Shame and Scandal. And tho' in a very Wicked and Degenerate Age, yet there is no Man of what Rank soever, that continues in this Sin and refuses to be reclaimed; but it will prove a Blemish to him, and a Scandal to any Dignity, Office, or Character that he bears. And tho' in Civility and Good Manners he may not discover this by any outward visible Disrespect: yet he must lose considerably in the inward Veneration and Esteem of Men.

Nor does it often fare better with these Sinners in their Estates; of which besides the Evidence of Reason, we have the Confirmation of almost every Days Experience. How often do such Men Ruine and Waste their Substance, and at last become Poor and Despicably Miserable? Thus it fared with these Offenders above two thousand Years ago: Nor has Time or Experience been able to teach such Men to escape the Mischief, any other way but by abstaining from the Sin. *Keep thee from the Evil Woman; from the Flattery of the Tongue of a strange Woman; Lust not after her Beauty in thine Heart, Neither let her take thee with her Eye-lids: for by means of a Whorish Woman a Man is brought to a Piece of Bread, Prov. vi. 24. &c. And Prov. v. 8, 9, 10. Remove thy way far from a strange Woman, and come not nigh the Door of her House, lest thou give thine Honour unto others, and thy Years unto the Cruel; Lest Strangers be filled with thy Wealth, and thy Labour be in the House of a Stranger: and thou*

mourn at the last when thy Flesh and thy Body are consumed. Agreeable to which is that Advice to the Son of Syrach, Ecclesi. ix. 16. *Give not thy Soul unto Harlots that thou lose not thine Inheritance.*

I may very pertinently add here to all the former Mischiefs, the Pernicious Effects of this Sin to the Bodies of those that live in it, who frequently impair their Health, and waste their Strength, and it may be dye Infamous Martyrs to their Lusts by the Rotteness of their Bones, and the Venemous Infection of a Noisom Scandalous Disease. But I am unwilling to enlarge upon so Loathsome and Odious a Subject. And yet methinks 'tis no small Evidence, no trifling Indication of God's great Displeasure against this Sin: that he has entail'd a Curse, and a Calamitous Distemper, even to Rotteness and Putrefaction, so peculiarly upon Adultery and Fornication; that it is not to be brought upon any of Mankind, but one of these Detestable Iniquities must be the Original Cause of it.

But I pass by all these things with transient Reflections; Not that they are in themselves either small or inconsiderable; for an Infamous and a Wicked Posterity, a Reproachful Character, a Beggar'd Fortune, and an Infected Body, are all of them very great and sore Calamities; But because there are greater Evils and Consequences more pernicious, and more justly to be lamented, yet behind. I mean,

3. Lastly, The Spiritual Mischiefs, and Miserable Consequences to the Soul, in Grieving the Holy Spirit of God, and repelling his Divine Grace, which is the true Fountain of Christian and Spiritual Life in us, and the Blessed Author of our Sanctification. This is an Evil which a very little Consideration will convince us is inseparable from this Vice, and from Adultery; And at the same time more deplorable than all the Evils that can befall our Credit, Estate, or Life: because these ill Effects will follow Men thro' the Grave, and make them Miserable to all Eternity.

For

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For the clearing what I intend on this Head, let it be remember'd that I have already shewn, that our Union with God and Christ, is by the Mediation of that Holy Spirit, which Resides and makes its Abode within us. That this is the Principle of Grace and all manner of Goodness in us; that to the joint Operation of this Holy Spirit with our Spirits, we owe both our good Affections and Desires, and also our Strength and Power to do what is Virtuous and Good. That therefore, according to the Proportion of God's Spirit in us, and our own Care to Cherish and Improve it, Such will be the Temper and Disposition of our Souls, and the Degrees of Goodness and Holiness in us. And that by consequence, upon the Want and Deprivation of this Spiritual Assistance, we must lose both our Inclinations and our Power of being Religious. We must become subject to our Bodies, Appetites, and Sensual Delights; we are then *Carnal and sold under Sin*, and led by the Instigation of our Lusts, which first wound our Consciences, and afterwards destroy them. We by these Degrees fall under the Power and Dominion of Sin, and by means of our own vile Affections are led captive by the Devil at his Will.

This is what the Gospel in several Places teaches and declare to us; and however it may seem Strange and Wonderful in the manner of it, to those who have a weak Faith, and faint Perceptions of things that fall not within the Ken of their Senses: it is a Divine and Certain Truth, and visibly apparent in its Effects upon the Tempers and Actions of Men.

Let it then but once more be consider'd, that *Fornication Dishonoureth the Body*, and *Defileth those Holy Temples* which the Spirit of God has consecrated and set apart for his own Habitation; That when we by defiling our Bodies Grieve the Holy Spirit, he will abandon and forsake us; That for our Relisting, and Abusing the Divine Grace of God it will be taken from us: Let us but possess our selves with Just No-
tions

tions of these mischievous and pernicious Consequences; and from hence it will be easie to find out what must necessarily be the Thoughts, and Dispositions, and Inclinations of such Men towards God and Religion. The Prophet *Hosea* iv. 11. has plainly taught us what Effects this Sensuality will produce. *Whoredom and Wine steal away the Heart,* and it must needs fare with these Men as it did with the *Romans* for these Disorders, viz. that they must be abandoned of God, and given up to *Uncleanness, and the Lusts of their own Hearts; to vile Affections, and a reprobate Mind; to do those things that are not convenient.* Rom. 7. 24, 26, 28. These Men must be entirely under the Conduct of their Corrupt Appetites, and Carnal Inclinations. They must needs be enslaved to their Lusts, and hardened in their Sins; and not without great difficulty, to be reclaimed, because they have at present lost not only their Spiritual Strength, but even the principle of good Affections and Desires.

Nay, It is morally impossible that these Men should contain themselves within the bounds of any one single Vice; but Iniquity will encrease, and the Works of the Flesh, and the Lusts of the Body will cloud their Understandings, byass their Judgments, infect their Minds, and debauch their Spirits. So that they can hardly refrain, but that from the dire Effects of this deadly Sin; they must fall into Atheism, Profaneness, Blasphemy, and an Universal Scorn, and Contempt of God, and Religion.

This our own Reason from the Doctrines of the Gospel will teach us to conclude must needs happen; and every Days Experience will confirm it. Atheism and Profaneness are grown to a very great height among us, and are become not only scandalous but formidable. We are fallen into such an Age, as the Roman Historian speaks of; in which our vices are intolerable, and yet become incurable: But consider how long this has been. Since Adultery and For-

Ad hæc tempora quibus nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est. Liv.

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nication have been conniv'd at, and exempted from the Censures of the Church, and the Punishment of the Civil Magistrates. And who are the Men among whom this Tremendous Mystery of Great Iniquity does chiefly work? It is among the Sensual and Unclean, that live in Adultery and Fornication. These are the Men that dispute the Being of a God, doubt his Providence over the World, and deny the Immortality of the Soul. These are they who *trample under foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant where-with they were sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of Grace.* These chiefly are they that disdain the Thoughts of Divine Revelation, and set up the Profane Oracles of false delusive Reason against the Infalible and Holy Oracles of God. These are they that blaspheme the name of the Blessed Jesus, and profane the Sacred Scriptures; that speak of a Saviour with Derision, and of Redemption with Scorn; that despise Heaven, and harden themselves against the Terrors of Hell. These are they in whom the *God of this World has blinded their Eyes*, and cast a Vail before their Understandings, whereby Sacred and Spiritual Things are become to them imperceptible; *they know them not, neither indeed can they know them, for they are Spiritually discerned,* 1 Cor. 2. 14. In a word, these are they that being swallow'd up in the Desires of the Flesh, and Sensual Delights, have Stifled all the Gracious Motions of the Spirit, have no Taste, nor Relish of Divine and Holy Things; have therefore *denied the Lord that bought them*, turn'd Apostates from the Faith; and labour to make the Doctrines of it ridiculous, and its Promises and Threatnings contemptible.

Nor is it strange that it should be so. Religion is against them, and therefore in Policy, and their own Defence, they must set themselves against Religion. Christianity threatens *Everlasting Burnings*, and unquenchable Flames, as the future Recompence of their present sordid Pleasures. And they have

no way to harden themselves against these Terrors, and enjoy tolerable Peace within ; but by a *feared Conscience*, and an *evil Heart of Unbelief* ; by rejecting the Authority of these Threatnings, by calling these Flames Folly, and the Gospel that preaches them a Delusion. It is now, since they will not be reclaim'd, become the Interest of such Men, and their only Hope of Comfort, to persuade themselves that all it says is false. And tho the Truth of Religion is attested by very rational, and strong, and serious Arguments ; yet when Men have once resolv'd that they will not *obey* it, it then becomes their Wisdom too to resolve that they will not *believe* it. And tho the Infidelity of such Men seems at first Sight much to be wonder'd at : Yet not at all when we seriously reflect upon their Actions. The greatest Wonder of all would be, that Men could live such Lives, and yet believe such Doctrines.

1 Tim. iv.
1.
Heb. iii.
13.

While therefore these Vices are tolerated, or conniv'd at, that repel Grace, destroy the Conscience, and make Men implacable Enemies to Religion, I doubt it will be in vain to hope for a sufficient Restraint of Blasphemy, and Profaneness, and wicked Opinions. Censures and Punishments may stop Men's Mouths, or make them more secret and retired in their Blasphemy : But the Gospel of our Salvation will hardly gain much better Veneration and Esteem in the Minds of Men ; till Adultery, Fornication, and all those abominable Lusts are restrain'd, that debauch Men's Spirits, and create this great Aversion, and Abhorrence of Christianity. *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary one to another.* And therefore it is to be feared that those Men who indulge themselves in the Works of the Flesh, will be always inclin'd, always endeavouring to ridicule, and to deride the Laws of God, and the Revelations of his Holy Spirit. Erroneous Opinions may do a great deal to encourage, and countenance,

Gal. v. 17.

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nance; and embolden Men in Iniquity; but they have the first Original and Source from vicious Practices; and are commonly first Devis'd and Broach'd by wicked Men of Immoral Lives to defend their Crimes, and quell and stifle the sharp Convictions of a guilty Conscience. And these are the Men to whom they prove extremely pernicious and mischievous. So that the most effectual Prevention and Suppression of Blasphemy, and Profaneness is to strike at the Root of them, and prevent and suppress those Vices that have occasion'd them.

Had it been in the Power of strong Arguments, and sound Reasons, and the Authority of Divine Revelation, well attested, to do this: Neither the one or the other could ever have come to that scandalous Height in a Church and a Nation, where the Gospel has had the best, the most sound, and judicious Defence of its Principles and Doctrine, that the Christian World ever saw, since the Primitive Times of immediate Inspiration. But how little force has the brightest Object where the Humours of the Eyes are muddied and clouded; when the Power of Reflection is lost, and the *Medium* of Perception so obstructed, that it cannot at all affect the Sense? How little signify the strongest Arguments in Spirituals, when the Heart is sensual, and a Vail cast before the Understanding? When the Mind is corrupt, the Judgment prejudic'd, and bias'd, and brib'd, to reject their Force, and oppose the Truth. And this is the Influence which Aduhery, Fornication, and all sensual Uncleaness naturally have on the Mind.

These in a word are usually the Consequences that attend this Unchristian Practice; and when both Character and Fortune, Reputation and Estate, Body and Soul, and that both of themselves and their Posterity are at stake, is it not high time to complain? And may we not be allow'd to expostulate with Man, why they will blind their Eyes, and stop their Ears, and cherish such gross and palpable Delusions?

Delusions? A Vice that is a certain Violation of God's Original Institution and Law made at the first Creation of the World; directly contrary to the repeated Commands and Precepts of the Gospel; and which besides the other Mischiefs, corrupts the Soul, debauches Men's Spirits, destroys their Consciences, and creates great Enmity and strong Aversions to God, and to Religion. What can be sinful? what can be offensive? or what can be dangerous to Men's Souls if this be not? But how wretched a thing it is to be hardened in Iniquity, and debauch'd to a deplorable degree of Inconsideration and Insensibility! Wou'd Men calmly and coolly reflect; The Shame and Infamy, the Beggary and Putrefaction, that almost universally attend it, might prove a sufficient and effectual Restraint. But if Temporal Considerations are not enough, yet those who have any Esteem for the Christian Faith and the Doctrines of the Gospel, are bound in Tenderness and Compassion to their Souls, to have a care. Man may allege what they please, and there was never yet any Vice, but the Parties concern'd in it would plead *Not guilty*, and offer something for its Excuse. But there is no withstanding these Reproofs, but by direct Apostacy from the Faith; nor any way to evade the Force of these Convictions, but by throwing aside the whole Authority of Christianity at once.

There is indeed a Christian Church that wou'd extenuate the Guilt of this Sin, by the soft Name of *Venial*; and that I think is the only Plea now left to be made in its Defence. But alas! what Defence is to be made from the Authority of a Church so notoriously Corrupt, both in Faith and Manners; and so far degenerated from the Primitive Spirit of Christianity. Especially, what a Plea is this to those who are not of that Communion? Their Opinions are as good a Defence for praying to Images, and worshipping of Saints. And indeed, instead of countenancing this Vice, should rather convince us, that according to the Universal

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verſal Blindneſs, which by the Judgment of God has hap-
pen'd to them, Idolatry, and Senſuality muſt needs go
Hand in Hand, and as inſeparable Companions mutually
ſupport and aſſiſt each other: *Be not deceiv'd then with vain
Words*, nor impoſed on by ſuch Deluſions and frivolous Ex-
cuſes. But fear and tremble at the heavy Judgments,
which God has threatn'd and denounc'd. Abſtain from,
and avoid ſo great, ſo dangerous a Sin, and ſo pernicious in
its Conſequences, with as earneſt Care as you would Death
it ſelf, or the very Gates of Hell.

*Deliver thy ſelf therefore from the ſtrange Woman, even
from the Stranger that flattereth with her Words, which forſak-
eth the Guide of her Youth, and forgetteth the Covenant of her
God. For her Houſe inclineth to Death, and her Paths unto the
Dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they
hold of the Paths of Life. And eſpecially, remember that
Faith into which you have been baptiz'd; know what man-
ner of Spirit you are of; and conſider the end of your Converſation.
God has not call'd you to Uncleanneſs, but to Holineſs. Your Con-
verſation is in Heaven; Mortifie therefore your Members that
are on the Earth, Fornication; Uncleanneſs, Inordinate Affection;
Evil Concupiſcence, and Covetouſneſs; which is Idolatry: For
which things ſake the Wrath of God cometh on the Children of
Diſobedience. Be ye not therefore partakers with them; but as he
who hath call'd you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of Con-
verſation.*

Prov. ii.
16, 17, &c.

Luk. ix.

55.

1 Theſſ.

iv. 7.

Phil. iii.

30.

Col. iii. 4.

Eph. v. 7.

1 Pet. i.

35.

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APPENDIX
CONCERNING
Concubinage.

TH^O the foregoing Discourse does I hope in some measure prove that Fornication is both a great and dangerous Sin; yet I have taken notice of such a Modern Distinction between Whoredom and Concubinage, as if not rightly understood and cleared, may be thought to evade the Force of most if not all of my Arguments. It may not therefore be improper to add somewhat by way of Appendix upon that Subject.

As for Concubinage in a Married State (*i. e.*) when either the Man who keeps, or the Woman who is kept as a Concubine are married, this comes so near the Concubinage of Antient Times, that what has been said already may be sufficient to the Determination of that Question. For if according to Christ's Interpretation of the Original Institution of Marriage, Polygamy be Adultery, such Concubinage must be Adultery also, let the Pretence be what it will. Nor can the Examples of *Abraham* or *Isaac*, or any other justify us in such things. For however God was pleased to Connive at them, this Original Institution is anew revealed in the Gospel, and our strict Observance of it necessary to Salvation.

But

Jo. Butler.
B. D.

But there is one Argument I have lately met with, that indeed did at first surprise me, because it came, as I suppose from a Graduate in Divinity, and pretended the Authority of an Apostle, no less than *St. Paul* or *St. Barnabas*, to Vindicate the lawfulness of such a Practise. But a little Reflection serves to discover that a disorderly Man of any Profession may easily pervert the meaning of Holy Scripture to excuse or extenuate the Guilt of his own Ill-Manners. And this I think is his Case. He would excuse his Adultery under the soft Name of Concubinage, and endeavours to prove such Concubinage Innocent from, *Heb. xiii. 4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled: but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* From which words the Argument is formed thus. The Word *na* or *na* is a Particle Copulative, and therefore the Words so joined ought to be of a different and distinct Signification. This Bed undefiled according to plain Grammatical Construction must be aptly Significant of some certain Bed distinct from the Marriage Bed, and that he says must be Concubinage; or the Words must bear a Riddle hard to be Understood. In this is the force of his Argument if it has any; but indeed it has none. 'Tis mere fallacy and sham. I will not dispute with him whether the Particle *na* be Copulative or Expletive. Let that pass, The Determination of this Debate does not turn on so nice a Point. I will suppose then *na* Marriage and *na* the Bed to have distinct Significations. But why must this needs mean his Concubinage. What will he say if *na* signifies here the Marriage Contract, and *na* the Consummation of it? What Riddle is started by this Meaning? Or what Hardship in it to be Understood?

And this I think is very evidently the Apostles Sense; and this Interpretation agreeable to Scripture-Phrase. *na* is used for a Marriage or Wedding, *Matth. xxii. 2, 3. Jo. ii. 1.* And *na* a Bed in the Sense I now alledge, *Rom. ix. 10* which our Translators have modestly Translated thus; *When Rebecca*

Rebecca also had conceived, which was by one even our Father Isaac. And that I may not stand alone in this, let Dr. Hammond be consulted on that Place, and *Gravina* on this of *Heb. xiii. 4.* who shews what his Opinion was by that notion of the *Effear*, which he cites as agreeable to the *Apostles* meaning. They he says abstained from Marriage, attamen-
vis 74m et vis 12 dnt dnt dnt dnt dnt, yet they neither dis-
allowed Marriage, nor the Procreation of Children. The pur-
 port of the Text then as I take it is this. *Marriage is ho-*
norable, and the Consummation of it without Uncleaness. The
 rest of all that fulsom Pamphlet may easily be answered
 from the foregoing Discourse.

The next thing therefore to be consider'd is the Con-
 cubinage of unmarried Persons; that is, when a Man and a
 Woman consociate on promise of Fidelity and Constancy to
 each other: But do not solemnly Marry according to the
 Laws of their Country. In which if it be pleaded that they
 fulfil the design of God's Institution, altho they do not
 make any solemn Matrimonial Contract as the Laws of the
 Land require: I would offer these things to be seriously
 consider'd.

1. Whether in this pretended Fidelity and Constancy to
 each other they be truly and conscientiously Sincere. (i.e.)
 Whether they are so firmly resolved to be thus Constant
 as to esteem their Separation to be a Sin, and all
 Consociation with any other to be Adultery. This we
 have seen the Original Institution of Marriage most cer-
 tainly requires. And if Men would examine themselves
 carefully in this Matter, I doubt it would come close to
 all Persons that live in such a Practice. For I doubt, it is a
 thirst for Liberty, and an unwillingness to be under so
 strict a Confinement and Restraint that is the chief Induce-
 ment to such Practices. For if Men resolve, and think
 themselves bound in Conscience to observe such inseparable
 Union, and Cohabitation as God's Law requires: What
 should hinder them from confirming this Obligation by Le-

gal Solemnities? If they do not think themselves thus bound, it is certain they are guilty of Fornication. But

2. There is a Conscientious Obedience due to all the Civil Constitutions and Laws of the Country where we live. This is one of the chief Acts of Subjection which we owe to the Supreme Magistrates and Powers. And as God has commanded us to be Obedient to them: So to despise their Good Laws is to Sin against God.

And this is the more Considerable; because in a great many Cases the Good or Evil of Humane Actions is to be determined wholly by Municipal Laws. As for Example; the Laws of Religion oblige us to be Just to all Men, and to do no wrong. But the Laws of our Country are in a great many Cases the only Standard whereby to discover what is Just and Right; and what is not. So also in the Case before us. The Design of the Gospel as I take it, is to condemn all Consociation of Man and Woman as Fornication but in the State of Marriage. But then it must be the Laws of our Country that must determine what is Marriage and what is not. Which consideration will yet have more Force if we add

3. That Marriage must suppose a Communion of Estates and Fortunes. For it cannot be that Persons so united as to be accounted but *One Flesh*, should have divided Interests, and separate Estates. They are the nearest Relations to each other which the World affords. Our Parents from whom we derive our Being, and whose Flesh and Blood we are, must yet, according to God's Command, yield to this closer Bond of Unity. Man and Wife should be united in Heart, and Life, and Properties. This is agreeable to the common Reason of Mankind; and therefore the Roman Law declared Marriage to imply a perpetual Consortship of Life, with a Communication of

Dig. l. 23.

Tit. 2. l. 1.

all Divine and Humane Rights. *Nuptia sunt conjunctio maris & femina, & consortium omnis vite, divini, & humani juris communicatio.* In order to this perpetual Consort-

ship

Ship of Life; their Law required that the Man should take the Woman to his own House, and this was necessary to constitute a Marriage.

For thus it was enacted. *Mulierem absenti per litteras ejus vel per nuntium posse nubere placet, si in domum ejus adducatur.* A Woman might be married to a Man that was absent, either by his Letters, or by a Messenger, provided that she was brought into his House. Public Cohabitation was

always required. And the Communication of their Rights and Interests is by all Nations esteem'd so Natural and Necessary that the Wife, whether she brought any Dowry or no, has a Right to Maintenance out of the Husbands Estate, tho' there preceded no Deed of Settlement. And the Husband by Marriage becomes Proprietor of all that Fortune and Estate that before could properly be call'd her own. To which end our Liturgy has properly inserted into the Form of Marriage, *with all my worldly Goods I thee endow.*

For this reason a Public Solemnizing of Marriage according to the Laws of the Land, becomes as Necessary to make their Cohabitation Lawful and Innocent: as it is to the Legal Communication of the Interests and Estates. Whatever is wanting to convey those Rights and Privileges which reason tells us Marriage in the very Nature of it does and must confer, and which God himself must therefore be supposed to intend: must needs hinder such from being Innocent and Agreeable to the Laws of God; and must make that Consortship to have the Guilt of Fornication. He and she then that are not Married according to the Laws of the Church and State, and so as thereby to convey to each other, and to their Children an undoubted Title to their Estates: are not Married as the Laws of God require, but undoubtedly live in Fornication.

'Tis true, a Man may by Deed of Gift, settle his Estate on his Wife, and her Posterity, if he pleases. And so he may upon any Body else. But it is still in his own Power

whether he will or no. Or if he does, she is never the less Infamous or Criminal for that. For we speak now of such a Communication of Rights as has its Foundation in the very Nature of Marriage; and as the Laws both of God and Man have made inseparable from it, and not left to a Man's Arbitrary Determination; nothing therefore can be a true, lawful, innocent Marriage or Consortship according to God's Original Institution: but what is so celebrated with Legal Ceremonies, and Solemnities, as Publicly to declare them to be *One* both in Affection and Interests, and mutual Partakers of each others Inheritance and Fortune whether Good or Bad. All other Cohabitation is Sinful, and forbidden.

4. Lastly, The solemnizing Marriage according to Custom of our Country is necessary to prevent Infamy, and remove scandal. By the Laws of Christianity we are bound to do only such things as are *commendable and of good report*; and to give no offence to the World, or to the Church of God. And this cannot be in the Consortship of Man and Woman without the Legal Solemnities of Marriage. For as to the World things that do not appear are as though they did not exist. And they that are not Legally Married, or do not Cohabit publicly as Man and Wife: are in the Judgment of Mankind as Unmarried. God 'tis true knows the Hearts, and Consciences of Men; but he does oblige us not only to do that which is in it self Good, but to take care that what we do appears to be so, that our Good Actions may shine to his Honour. He enjoins not only what is *lawful*, but also what is *Convenient*. He commands not only what is Innocent, but what is also commendable in the sight of all Men. And we must carefully avoid not only what is in its nature Evil, but also what is without Offence or Scandal.

And this I am perswaded is a Good Reason why Legal Solemnization, and open Cohabitation should be essentially necessary to constitute a Marriage in the sense of Gods Law, as well as of the Laws of Men. For though it be confessed

self's'd that a Faithful, and Perpetual Consociation be the first Condition in the Essence of Marriage, and that which is above all things required to make it innocent: Yet, as we have seen already that is not all. There must be moreover a communication of Right; And as the Laws of God consult not only the Natural Morality of our Actions, but also his Honour in the Reputation of them; and the edification and Good of our Brethren in avoiding Scandal and Offence: So much must be necessary in the sense of Gods Law, to a Lawful Marriage, as may keep it clear of infamy and reproach. Seeing it was his particular Design in this Institution, to *sanctify* this estate, and make it *Honourable*, and of *good esteem*: all such Consortship must needs be Criminal, and Guilty before him, which by its disagreeableness to our common Reason, and the common Approved Institutions both of Church and State, becomes both Injurious and Scandalous. It is therefore necessary, and essential to Marriage, even in the sense of Gods Law that it should be Solemnly, and Legally celebrated. Hereby the Ends of it may best be attain'd. Hereby Man and Wife become most strongly oblig'd to perpetual cohabitation; their Rights are best communicated; and the Honour of that State most eminently consulted. Hereby alone can it be easily distinguish'd who are Married; and who live in Fornication.

If no more were required to make a real Marriage than the mutual Consent of perpetual Consortship: how shall the World, and especially how shall the Government be satisfied who are Married and who are not? How shall the Law distinguish between those who have so consented, and who have not? How shall it be known whose Children are Legitimate, and whose are not so? Or how shall the greatest confusion imaginable be prevented in matters of Right or Wrong? Legitimate Children have a Legal Right to the inheritance of their Parents: but the illegitimate have none. And yet how shall this be determin'd: unless Marriage be publicly and legally Solemniz'd. Again, here would be the greatest encouragement to Fornication imaginable;
in

in that Whoredom could not so easily be distinguish'd. They who had not consented to this inseparable union would appear in the same Reputation with those that had: if the Legal Solemnization was once rejected as unnecessary to Marriage. And can that be free from Sin, and without God's great displeasure, which is productive of such mighty mischiefs?

Ignat. ad
Polycar-
pum.

To prevent all this confusion it has universally prevail'd in all Nations: that Matrimony should be Publickly ow'd. In the Primitive times of Christianity it was solemniz'd with the consent of the Bishop. And so agreeable is this to the common sense of Mankind: that the Roman Law says, *Simulate Nuptie non sunt Nuptie. Counterfeit Marriage is no Marriage.* By which I understand that which is not celebrated Solemnly, and Publickly as the Law prescribes. Those that are thus Legally Married are Man and Wife, and their Children Legitimate; the rest live in Fornication, and their Children are of base and dishonourable Birth.

So that the Evils which unavoidably follow the neglect of Customary Solemnities are a sufficient Argument how indispensably necessary they are, in the Judgment of God as well as of Men. For God must be supposed to intend all that as essential to Matrimony, which appears necessary to make it Honourable, and to prevent such mighty Mischiefs. And therefore, if Men would but deal faithfully with their own Consciences; it were easy to discover, that what is contrary to the Laws of Government; capable of being abused to very ill purposes; brings on Man and Woman the imputation of Whoredom; on their Offspring the disgrace of Bastardy; is a scandal to the Church of God, and in the sense of the World is esteemed and called Fornication: will undoubtedly have the guilt of such before God, and can never, upon some *Clandestine* unknown reserve, be found Innocent and Safe, and Justifiable at his dreadful and impartial Tribunal, *Marriage is Honourable and the Marriage Bed undefiled: but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge.*

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